

PRESS RELEASE

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Contact: [Alexa Garcia-Ditta](#), 512-823-2873, 713-301-6780

More Than 40 Health and Community Organizations Launch Campaign to Collect Stories and Engage with Uninsured Texans Left in the Coverage Gap

AUSTIN, TEXAS---Today more than 40 Texas health care advocacy organizations, faith and community groups, including the Center for Public Policy Priorities, launched [Texas Left Me Out](#), a campaign in English and [Spanish](#) to collect stories from uninsured Texans left in the coverage gap and connect them with available health care options and advocacy efforts.

While thousands of Texans living above the poverty line are successfully purchasing health plans on the Marketplace and getting help to pay for them, more than one million of Texas' poorest adults are still being left out due to Texas' choice to refuse billions of federal dollars to extend coverage to them.

"All of us know the people being left out of coverage; they are the working poor and we work with them every day," said Sister JT Dwyer of Seton Healthcare Family. "It's the veteran and his wife, the construction worker who helped build your neighborhood, the person that takes care of your child at the nursery and the health attendant that helps you care for your aging parents."

Irma Aguilar is just one of more than one million Texans left with nowhere to turn for affordable health coverage. A 28-year-old mother of four from San Antonio, Aguilar is an assistant manager at Pizza Hut but still does not make enough money to qualify for financial assistance in the Marketplace. She has damaged disks in her neck and suffers from high blood pressure that makes her dizzy, but she's unable to afford treatment.

"I need to be able to keep working and providing for my family, but every single day I worry about what would happen if I had to stop working because of my health conditions," she said.

Health care navigators and certified application counselors at in-person enrollment sites all over the state are turning away hardworking Texans hoping to get health insurance because they make too little to qualify for financial assistance. Elizabeth Colvin with Insure Central Texas and her staff are having those tough conversations every day.

"We have been left with an awkward situation—a single parent of two earning \$17,000 a year will receive no financial assistance for health coverage, while a second uninsured parent of two earning \$20,000 a year will qualify for full health coverage for \$33-per-month or less," Colvin

said. “We have to tell people that they have no options and there is no worse feeling when you know someone desperately needs a surgery or medical attention. We have to deliver the news that our society has left them out.”

Supporting organizations have presented a [letter](#) to the Texas Legislature, highlighting the urgency of this problem and alerting them to the Texas Left Me Out campaign.

More than 640 Texans have already signed on through the Texas Left Me Out [website](#), which is available in English and [Spanish](#). Uninsured Texans can also call 866-697-3155 or text “Leftout,” or “Cobertura” in Spanish, to 30644 to connect to the campaign.

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